



News Release

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ADEQ Director Steve Owens Announces Plan to Reduce Exposure to Toxics in South Phoenix

PHOENIX - Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens today announced the start of a pilot project to reduce public exposure to toxic substances in South Phoenix.

The project, a partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 9, will bring together community representatives, environmental experts and other officials to identify the most problematic toxic pollutants in South Phoenix and then develop a plan to reduce public exposure to those pollutants.

"Governor Napolitano and I are very concerned about protecting the residents of South Phoenix from environmental health risks," said ADEQ Director Steve Owens. "This pilot project will help us identify the most problematic toxic pollutants and then serve as a guide to lower public exposure to those harmful substances."

The project funded by a \$270,000 EPA grant will identify sources of toxic pollutants, analyze those source contributions and their potential adverse health and environmental effects, and develop a prioritized action plan to lower public exposure to these toxic substances. The project also requires an extensive communication and public outreach effort.

(more)

South Phoenix Project 2-2-2

"This project is another opportunity to partner with ADEQ, the county, the city of Phoenix and the community to help reduce toxic exposures from air, waste and water. We all have a shared commitment to solving a difficult environmental problem, " said Jack Broadbent, the EPA's Air Division director for the Pacific Southwest office. "We envision that this effort will serve as a model for other communities within Phoenix and throughout the state."

Owens said community participation and trust will be critical to the success of this effort.

"This project will be conducted in full partnership with the community," Owens said.

"Community members will help us define the area of concern and develop strategies to address the toxic substances we target for reduction," Owens said.

The project builds upon recent ADEQ efforts in South Phoenix such as the cleanup of a 10-acre site near Buckeye Road and 5th Street contaminated with heavy metals from a former auto shredding facility and the department's increased monitoring and inspection of hazardous waste facilities in South Phoenix.

The project also seeks to leverage the department's shared interests and existing partnerships with EPA Region 9, Maricopa County, the city of Phoenix, elected officials, civic leaders, private sector and non-profits, community groups and local residents.

ADEQ is soliciting volunteers to serve on a community action council to oversee the project and to keep residents informed once the project is established. Those interested in serving as a member of the community action council should contact Ward Jacox at (602) 771-4424 or Maria Quintero at (602) 771-2266.